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# Letter dated 11 March 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

The Government of the Republic of Rwanda would like to reply to the press communiqué of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo concerning the situation in Ituri contained in the annex to the letter dated 10 March 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council and circulated as a document of the Security Council (S/2003/291).

The Government of the Republic of Rwanda cannot be associated with the situation in the Ituri region for the following reasons:

1. The Rwandan Defence Forces made a total withdrawal from the Democratic Republic of the Congo last year, more precisely on 5 October 2002. This total withdrawal was confirmed by the report of the third-party verification mechanism, which includes representatives of the Secretary-General, the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Africa.

2. The situation in Ituri is a creation of the United Nations, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Government of Uganda. The Ugandan People's Defence Force (UPDF) is operating in the Ituri region under the mandate of the United Nations. Rwanda never endorsed the stay of some foreign forces in the Ituri region. That is why Rwanda cannot be responsible for the violation of human rights prevailing in that country.

3. Rwanda as a peace-loving country would commend the immediate total withdrawal of UPDF from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and more precisely from the Ituri region and according to the Lusaka Agreement, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo troops must not be in the Ituri region.

4. The United Nations must shoulder its responsibilities in the Ituri region by protecting the civilian population and by demanding that UPDF and the Forces armées Congolaises (FAC) quit immediately and unconditionally the Ituri region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

5. The Government of the Republic of Rwanda requests the Security Council to exert its influence on the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Government of Uganda, and all Congolese rebels to implement fully all

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the agreements they have signed in order to achieve peace and security in the Great Lakes Region.

6. The unsubstantiated claims by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in paragraph 5 of its press communiqué is intended to divert the opinion of the international community from the reality on the situation in the Ituri region. The whole truth is that the Rwandan Defence Forces are not in the Ituri region or anywhere else in the Democratic Republic of the Congo territory. Therefore it is clear Rwanda cannot fight with Uganda in the Ituri region or anywhere in the Democratic Republic of the Congo territory for the simple reason that Rwandan troops left the Democratic Republic of the Congo in October 2002.

My Government would be grateful if this reply could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Stanislas **Kamanzi**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Rwanda
to the United Nations